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REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 2, 2005. Claims 1-57 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 14, 28 and 29 have been amended to rewrite them in independent form, and claims 1 and 15 have been amended to clarify the claimed invention. The Office Action indicates that claims 3-12, 17-26 and 30-57 are allowed. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 13-16 and 27-29 are presented for reconsideration, with claims 1, 14, 15, 28 and 29 being in independent form.

Claims 1, 2, 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as purportedly anticipated by the discussion of the Related Art in the application. Claims 13 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious over the discussion of the Related Art in the application.

Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 15 are patentable over the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

The present application relates to techniques for reducing a size of a binary image.

For example, each of independent claims 1 and 15 provides for reducing the size of the binary image in a sub-scanning direction by using a conditional OR process, and limiting a size-change point determined by a reduction rate to one of an odd-number line or an even-number line. Thus, the conditional OR process is carried out only on one of the odd-number line or the even-number line. Each of independent claims 1 and 15 includes these features.

Such an approach incurs a reduced cost as compared to the techniques proposed in the related art wherein the reduction process includes applying a conditional OR process to both odd-numbered lines as well as even numbered lines. As discussed in the Related Art section of the application, a conditional OR process reduces two pixels into one pixel, and when the conditional

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OR process is applied to sub-scan direction reduction processing, memory means is required for storing a conditional OR process result for both an even-number line as well as an odd-number line (that is, two memories are required).

The background art discussed in the Related Art section of the application simply does not disclose or suggest, however, reducing the size of the binary image in a sub-scanning direction by using a conditional OR process, and limiting a size-change point determined by a reduction rate to one of an odd-number line or an even-number line, as provided by each of independent claims 1 and 15.

Accordingly, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 15, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over the cited art.

In addition, claim 1 has been amended to include the features that when the one of the odd-number line or the even-number line to process corresponds to a size-change point, after the line has been processed, a thin-out flag is turned on for the other line, and when the other line corresponds to a size-change point or the thin-out flag is turned on therefor, image output is not carried out (as shown in Figs. 7 and 8A and discussed in corresponding portions of the application). Therefore, in contrast to the cited art, only one memory is required for the conditional OR process.

Such additional features of claim 1 as amended are simply not taught or suggested in the cited art.

The Office Action indicates that claims 3-12, 17-26 and 30-57 are allowed, and that 14, 28 and 29 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any

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intervening claims.

By this Amendment, claims 14, 28 and 29 have been amended to rewrite them in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

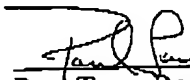
Applicant appreciates the Examiner's statement in the Office Action of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter and submits that the allowed claims (and claims 14, 29 and 29) recite subject matter which further supports patentability for reasons in addition to those identified in the Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance in the Office Action.

In view of the remarks hereinabove, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance, and earnestly solicits the allowance of the application.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition. The Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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